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A

# FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE DEATH OF THE

COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

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Price One Shilling.

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285



*The Saint's Triumph in the Approach  
of Death.*

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THE  
SUBSTANCE  
OF A  
SERMON

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

The Right Hon. *SELINA*,

Countess Dowager of *Huntingdon*.

PREACHED IN

ARTILLERY CHAPEL, PARLIAMENT-COURT,  
ARTILLERY-STREET, BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT.

On SUNDAY Evening the 10th of *July*, 1791.

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BY THE

Rev. *JOHN HENRY MEYER*, *A*  
Minister of the said CHAPEL; Master of the Academy,  
ARTILLERY-STREET; and late Student at the  
University of HALLE, in SAXONY.

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L O N D O N :

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A

FUNERAL SERMON.

&c. &c.

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2 TIM. iv. 7, 8.

*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

**G**OD, whose judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out, the habitation of whose throne is righteousness and judgment, though

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clouds

clouds and darkness are round about him, who moves in a mysterious way to perform his mighty wonders, who governs among the armies of heaven, and rules among the inhabitants of the earth, who works according to the good pleasure of his sovereign will, has been pleased to remove from his church militant one of her brightest ornaments, for the *Countess of Huntingdon* is no more——

Selina's gone! the happy spirit's fled!  
 Selina's gone! she's number'd with the dead!  
 The battle's fought; the victory is won;  
 Selina's gone t' receive th' immortal crown.

To speak of her as she merits to be spoken of, requires brighter abilities than I possess; nevertheless, slender as they are, I attempt this as a proof and testimony of affection and love, and as a token of respect due to her memory.

Those

Those who knew her best, are the best able to speak her worth ; but thus much all must allow, there never was her equal in a woman before ; and what God can effect for his church now she's removed, must be left to him, who does all things well. It is said, " not many mighty, not many noble are called ;" but, blessed be God, there are some, and *Lady Huntingdon* was of this blessed number ; grace, sovereign, distinguishing grace reached her heart ; she bowed to the sceptre of redeeming love, and was taught by the Spirit's teaching to say :

O ! to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrain'd to be.

The work God had appointed her to do was truly great, and attended with uncommon trials and difficulties ; but, supported by him who has said, " My  
grace



grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness," she proved faithful to death, and is now gone to receive the eternal reward, not as a reward of merit, but of sovereign grace. With an heroic Paul, having death in view, she could triumph and say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;" and what awaits me now? "A crown of righteousness, which God the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.

In order to improve this affecting providence, I shall endeavor, under the influence of divine grace, to consider:

The saints triumph in the approach of death. And,

First,



First, Who are to be considered as saints, in the scripture acceptation of the word. Then,

Secondly, What considerations cause the saints to triumph with death in their view :

1. Their victory is complete—"I have fought the fight, and have obtained the victory;" I have ran the race, and am now arrived at the goal. I have kept that which was given to me, according to the measure of grace afforded me. And now,

2. Their views are bright; heaven is in view; the crown is at the end of the way, and for me laid up, for me, is the dying language of the dying saint. But to return to the first head of our discourse, and to enquire

Who

Who are to be considered as saints in the scripture acceptation of the word.

1. Saints are elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, agreeable to holy Peter's language, 1 ep. of Peter, ch. i. ver. 2. And again in the second chapter and 9th verse, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." God, when he speaks of his saints, says concerning them—"This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21.

2. Saints

2. Saints are said to be, and really are, called in time, by the sovereign, distinguishing grace of God. Hence the apostle, when writing to Timothy in his 2d epistle, 1st chapter, 9th ver. says, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, no, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Those who are saints in the estimation of God, never had any thing of their own to plead, why God should shew them peculiar mercy; no: "they were made willing in the day of his power," Psalm cx. 3.; and, being made willing by the almighty power of God, renouncing all dependence upon any thing of their own, they were brought to taste the ineffable pleasure of being everlastingly and completely saved by the sovereign grace of God in Christ Jesus.

B

3. Saints



3. Saints are also sanctified in Christ Jesus; for he is not only made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, but also sanctification and redemption. Saints are individually and personally sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Hence the apostle, when writing to the Corinthians, says in his first epistle, chap. vi. ver. 11. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

4. In fine. Saints are sealed to the day of redemption: they have received the Spirit as an earnest of their future inheritance; they are those who are predestinated to the adoption of sons, hewn out of the quarry of nature, translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son, are separated from the world, experience the indwelling of the



the Spirit in their hearts; are brought nigh by the precious atoning blood of Jesus, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; and by the operations of God's Spirit upon their hearts, are made meet for an inheritance among saints in light. Now these saints, when they are about to enter the gloomy vale, can triumph in the approach of that messenger, who is to be their conductor from sorrow to joy, from earth to heaven; for their work is nearly done, their prospects are glorious, and, with heaven in their view, they rejoice to set full sail for the harbour. Such a saint was dear *Lady Huntingdon*. Though born to enjoy all the grandeur of a court, she chose rather to suffer affliction with the blood-bought people of God, desirous of spending her all in his cause, who, by his Spirit, gave her to see the emptiness of

all things here below, to taste the sublime pleasures of religion, and to aspire after that crown of glory, promised to all his faithful persevering followers. Was it any wonder, after having spent the greatest part of her life in the cause of her God and Saviour, that she was permitted to say, "I am encircled in the arms of love and mercy; I long to be at home; O! I long to be at home?" And, a little before she died, she said repeatedly, "I shall go to my Father this night." My dear hearers, view this dying saint triumphing in the approach of death. Does not her language bespeak the composure and serenity of her mind? Yes; she could look forward with boldness, and say with an undaunted Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; and now I know  
the

the crown of righteousness awaits me." Having thus briefly dismissed the first part of the subject, let us proceed to point out,

Secondly, What considerations cause the saints to triumph with death in their view?

1. Their victory is complete through the slaughtered Lamb. And,

2. Their views are bright, heaven is in their view.

The holy apostle makes use of three similes in allusion to the Olympic games. He takes the first simile from a combatant; and considering himself as a christian warrior, he says, "O Timothy, I have fought the good fight."



fight." He takes his second simile from a racer, and says to Timothy, "My son, I have finished my course, I am just at the goal." He takes his third simile from one who has a peculiar trust and charge committed to him, and says, "O Timothy, I have kept the faith: I have not embezzled or made shipwreck of that with which I was entrusted: no; I have kept the faith; and my Master invites me now to receive the glorious and immortal prize. From hence it appears, that every christian is a warrior. He no sooner enlists under the glorious banner of the Captain of his salvation, but he finds himself called to fight the battles of his Lord: his enemies are spiritual. "We wrestle not," says Paul, when writing to the Ephesians, chap. vi. 12. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood,



blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places :” and as his enemies are spiritual, so his weapons are spiritual. The champion Paul tells the Corinthians, in his second Epistle, chap. x. 3, 4, 5., that we do not war after the flesh. “ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong-holds ; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God ; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” The christian’s warfare is also spiritual ; and at last, blessed be God, he’ll rejoice in a spiritual and eternal victory.

In

In order to fight the Lord's battles it is necessary that saints should be men and women of courage. Paul was so sensible of this, that he addresses Timothy, in the second chapter of his second Epistle, 1st and 3d verse; thus, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." And again, in his first Epistle, chap. vi. 12., "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." Now these are the admonitions of a soldier, whose garments had been rolled in blood in his Lord and Master's cause. He knew what it was to have fought the good fight, and that courageously. I remember to have read a beautiful observation of a christian warrior; he must, says he, have three hearts, the heart

heart of a Job to endure patiently, the heart of a Jacob to be fervent in prayer wrestling with God, and the heart of a David to animate him to trust in God, when he experiences himself to be invaded by fear.

Dear *Lady Huntingdon* was an old soldier in Immanuel's cause: her garments were, as it were, stained with blood; and, great as her persecutions were, (particularly at *Ashby-de-la-Zouch*; where even her life was oft in the most imminent danger, and in other places, as she herself has told me, where the populace shattered almost every pane of glass in her dwelling, while the people were met together to hear of the way to life) she remained unshaken, and was never suffered to desert the banner of the cross, but lived and died a noble example



for every one enlisted under the same banner to follow.

But we proceed to consider the christian under the idea of a racer. Every one who runs in a race, has some peculiar object in view; and so has every christian racer: these objects are, the glory of God, and the salvation of precious and immortal souls; and with these great objects in view, he experiences the happiness of having secured the salvation of his own soul. "I therefore," says Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, ch. ix. ver. 26, 27, "so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

And



And again, when writing to Timothy in his second epistle, chap. i. ver. 12. " I know in whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

The christian racer, in order that he may run successfully, runs from sin to God: his language and experience is the same as the great apostle of the Gentiles, Philip. iii. 13, 14. " Now this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The christian racer, in order that he may run successfully, abstains from every appearance of evil. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the

eye, and the pride of life, are sometimes dreadful barriers in his way; but, strengthened by the Spirit's might in the inner man, he is enabled to "lay aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets him, and so runs with patience the race set before him, looking to Jesus the author and finisher of his faith," Heb. xii. 1, 2.

When Paul assembled the elders of Ephesus, he addresses himself to them, in the xxth chapter of the Acts, ver. 23, 24: "The Holy Ghost witnesseth that bonds and afflictions abide me; but" (says this noble champion in the cause of God and truth), "none of these things move me: neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.  
Was

Was not this the experience of dear *Lady Huntingdon*? Though, strictly speaking, bonds did not await her. Every one who had the honor of knowing her, knew, that sore trials, bitter persecutions and heavy afflictions did; but none of these moved her; all her prayer was to be found faithful in the discharge of that great trust God had reposed in her, so that she might at last be enabled to give up her account with joy. Hear her own words—

“ All the little ruffles and difficulties  
 “ which surround me, and all the  
 “ pains I am exercised with in this  
 “ poor body, through mercy, affect  
 “ not the settled peace and joy of my  
 “ soul.”

My dear hearers, enquire how have you  
 ran the christian race? Could you say with  
 with



her, were you to be called soon away, "I long to be at home?" Happy that christian racer who, when he comes to close his eyes in death, can say, My work is done; I am now at the end of the race-way, and all is well; I have finished my course.

The apostle makes use of another simile in the words of the text; he takes it from one who has a peculiar trust committed to him, and says, "I have kept the faith." I apprehend the meaning of the apostle to be this—Timothy my son, I tell thee as with my dying breath, the time of my departure is at hand; but, with death in my view, I can add, through the riches of sovereign grace, I have never deserted the standard; I have not betrayed the truths committed to me; but

but have handed them down to posterity maugre all opposition: the truths of the gospel which I preached, though to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, yet to the believing, among both Jews and Greeks, they have been Christ the wisdom of God, and Christ the power of God. I have remained steadfast, dependent upon my Master; and now I am ready to receive the crown. This might, with propriety, be the language of that dear *Lady*, to whose memory this hour is sacred, zealous in spreading abroad the favor of Immanuel's name; his cause and interest engaged her attention till almost her latest breath.

But we find Paul in his labors could not go all the way smooth; he had to complain of some who had de-  
fected

serted the standard, and this gave the apostle great grief. Attend to his lamentable complaint, 2 Tim. 4. 10. " Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present evil world;" and observe his charge and the cause of it, 1 Tim. x. 18, 19, 20. " This charge (referring to the preceding) I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare: holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck; of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander. My dear hearers, it is the christian's privilege to keep the faith, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints: Remember the admonition, Rev. ii. 10. " Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."

Our



Our dear departed *Lady Hantington* did not experience every thing to go on smoothly in her arduous work ; children whom she fostered in her bosom with maternal care, have oftentimes grieved her generous heart ; but she is no more !

O, my friends, if it is the privilege of a dying saint, in the approach of death, to rejoice in a complete victory ; may this privilege be yours and mine, and with our expiring breath, may each one say for himself, I have fought the good fight, and can now shout victory ; the race is ran, I am now at the goal. But we proceed to observe,

A saint can rejoice with death in his view, because the prospect of immortality is before him. This is the language of Paul with death in his view : “ Henceforth there is laid up

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for

for me a crown of righteousness ;” nothing awaits me but to pass through the allotted passage to glory. And was not this the happy frame of dear *Lady Huntingdon*? Mind; listen with a serious and solemn attention to her own language. A day or two before her last illness, just as she had come from her room to her elbow-chair, “The Lord hath been  
 “ present with my spirit this morning  
 “ in a remarkable manner: what he  
 “ means to convey to my mind, I know  
 “ not; it may be my approaching departure: my soul is filled with glory:  
 “ I am as in the element of heaven  
 “ itself.” O my hearers, when the dying faint eyes the prize at the end of the way, he understands Paul’s arithmetic when he says, Rom. viii. 18: “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared

pared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

The apostle, in the text, represents eternal glory under the idea of a crown, and a crown of righteousness, which is to be given by the righteous Judge to all that love and long for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence we may observe: the saint is not to have his crown here; it is laid up for him: but, blessed be God, it is sure; and this comforts him under many a heavy trial; the language of his soul is glory, glory be to God, "I know this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality: now when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then I shall be enabled to sing, Victory, Victory!



“ Thanks be to God who hath given me, even me the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We may observe further,

The crown of righteousness is not in reserve for one saint only. No, says Paul, the crown is not for me only, but for all who love and long for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” How earnestly did *Lady Huntingdon* long for this blessed day! how frequently used she to exclaim, The coming of the Lord draweth nigh! O the coming of the Lord draweth nigh! With the good old patriarch she could say, “ I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.” O what a comfortable consideration is this, the crown is for all who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. Paul the aged obtains the crown

crown of righteousness in the same way the dying thief on Calvary obtained it. And was not this the exact sentiment of dear *Lady Huntingdon*? “ I confess  
 “ (said she, speaking to a friend), I  
 “ have no hope but that which inspired  
 “ the dying malefactor at the side of  
 “ my Lord; and I must be saved in  
 “ the same way, as freely, as fully, or  
 “ not at all.” Blessed be God, there is but one way to glory; may we be found in it. It is equally as obvious,

The crown of righteousness is not merited by any thing we can do: no, says Paul, was it so, I would not accept it. The Lord the righteous judge will give it me. “ It is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but it is by his own mercy we are saved. Saved (says Paul, Eph. ii. 8.) by grace through

through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God." The soul thus saved by grace, and made willing to endure the cross, shall most assuredly obtain the crown. Gain encouragement, ye travellers to Zion; remember "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," Isaiah xxxv. 10.

Yet a season and, you know,

Happy entrance shall be given;

All our sorrows left below,

And earth exchange'd for heaven.

But as I now draw to the conclusion, your curiosity is perhaps raised to hear more than I have advanced concerning  
this



this most valuable woman. It was her peculiar request that nothing respecting her life, or correspondencies, might be published; but, without offending those who have the management of her great concerns, I venture to mention the following particulars.

God, who had chosen her from all eternity to be the happy and blessed means of spreading and causing to be spread abroad the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, was pleased to begin at an early period to work upon her mind. She would often, when a child, seclude herself from the family, and secrete herself in some remote place to pray unto the Lord, and was uncommonly desirous of attending funeral solemnities, particularly those of children; and once, when standing by the  
grave

grave of a child, she remembered to have prayed the Lord to grant that she might die happy. As she attained to years of maturity she was zealous in the profession of religion, but was unacquainted with its power till God was pleased to lay her upon a bed of affliction ; it was then the Lord's time to break in upon her soul, and to discover his pardoning love to her heart. While she was thus under the afflicting hand of God, it was advised that two of the most eminent dignitaries of the church should attend her ; but it was as if whispered to her heart, " They will deceive you." The Spirit's power alone was sufficient to break her bonds and liberate her soul ; and this was effected. When the Lord was pleased to restore her, she sent for that great man of God, now with her in glory, the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, and  
 acknow-

acknowledged herself to be savingly and powerfully convinced of the reality of those truths which he advanced, as being entirely consonant with the word of God, and added, you may depend in future upon my aid. How far she proved faithful to her promise, is clearly to be seen in the journal and letters of that happy man: he went, patronized by her *Ladyship*, through England, Scotland, Ireland, and America, declaring Jesus Christ alone to be the way, the truth and the life.

When her *Ladyship* first embarked in the glorious cause of the Redeemer, she used, with a trusty female servant, whom the Lord had made her the happy instrument of bringing to a knowledge of the truth, to visit the sick poor; and, though a *Countess*, thought

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it



it no disparagement to her dignity to enter the meanest hovel to converse with poor creatures concerning their immortal souls. How oft have I sat with peculiar delight in the study at her college in Wales, hearing her, from her own experience, animating her students to be zealous in their Master's cause, assuring them, experience would convince them, they would find their wages in their work ! How frequently have I of late attended to her encouraging discourse, when taking a retrospective view of all that way by which the Lord had been pleased to bring her ! But her work is done, and she is entered into rest.

I must not, however, pass one grand particular. Sensible of the great things God had done for her, she was fully convinced

vinced she could not do too much for him. In order therefore to be more extensively useful, in the year 1768 she established a College at Treveca in South Wales, for the admission of pious young men, in order to train them up for the ministry. This seminary was opened the 24th of August, in the abovenamed year, by the Rev. Mr. Whitefield; and it was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The next morning Mr. Whitefield came into the parlor to her Ladyship and said, My dear Lady, I know God has great things to do here. My spirit has been wrestling with him all this night; but, said he, twenty blanks to a prize; my Lady, twenty blanks to a prize. Afterwards, whenever she met with any difficulty, she would cheerfully observe, Blessed be God, it is not so bad as dear White-

field said, not quite twenty blanks to a prize. However, the success attending this institution, many in and out of the establishment are now living to testify.

I have only a few more circumstances to mention, among the many I might adduce. Many times, speaking to the Earl her husband upon the splendor of a court, she observed, "What will all this avail me, if my soul is lost?" She often labored under a sore temptation, lest the dignity she was constrained to sustain should lead her heart from God. She was delivered from this temptation in a most remarkable manner. There was in the neighbourhood of Ashby-de-la-Zouch an old man known by the name of Samuel, a poor miserable hardened wretch; his heart appeared as hard as the smooth millstone. All that Lady



*Huntingdon* could say to him concerning the danger of his state, the awfulness of death, the certainty of judgment, all was in vain; nothing seemed to impress his obdurate heart, but the sorrow of quitting his wretched abode. This poor creature was upon his dying bed: and notwithstanding many, when they saw they could make no impression upon him, would have forsaken him, *Lady Huntingdon* continued her visits, talking to and praying with him.

One time, while her *Ladyship* was thus exercising her philanthropy, the poor wretch, whose habitation was as wretched as wretched could be, exclaimed thus: O what a sad thing it is: to leave this pretty place! Here I have made this habitation so comfortable. I have stopped this place  
and

and the other, and now I must die, and leave this beautiful place for my daughter! Her *Ladyship*, filled with amazement, went to prayer with this poor creature. Upon her return, her maid-servant, who always attended her upon these pious excursions, observed she was sure God had some great thing to effect, for she never felt the power of prayer to such a degree in her life. Well; the next day (behold what God can do!) Samuel's hard heart was softened; old Samuel saw himself a sinner, and knew Jesus to be a Savior. And when her *Ladyship* visited him, found him rejoicing in Jesus Christ. And thus, while God broke Samuel's heart, he delivered her *Ladyship* from the temptation under which she labored; for she concluded thus: It is not what we possess, but setting the whole heart and affections upon what

we

we possess; it is this is displeasing in the sight of God. She knew what it was to have made a solemn surrender of her heart to Jesus. Jesus was her all and in all.

One thing more, and with this I shall conclude. Sensible of the kindnesses I have received from her Ladyship, at the same time viewing the peculiar providence which led me to an acquaintance with her, I cannot but stand amazed at the superabounding goodness of God towards me; and can say with Paul, "By the grace of God I am that I am." I was admitted by *Lady Huntingdon* a student in her College the 18th of September 1774. The following year her Ladyship received repeated applications to send some of her students to Froome in Somersetshire. Ever willing to comply with requisitions



quitions of this nature, she fixed upon  
 myself and another now in glory, whose  
 name was *Seymour*, to go to Froome.  
 Young and unexperienced, each of us  
 having attained only our nineteenth  
 year, we pleaded our youth, our inex-  
 perience, the weakness of our abilities,  
 but all in vain. Methinks I see dear  
*Lady Huntingdon* now sitting in her  
 parlor at the College, saying, (for these  
 were her words) Come, come, *Meyer*;  
 come, *Seymour*; you are only going  
 to a few simple souls: tell them con-  
 cerning Jesus Christ, and they will be  
 satisfied. At length we were compelled  
 to yield. And, blessed be God, we  
 did not go in vain; but instead of  
 meeting with a few, the Lord sent  
 many souls; for the second sermon I  
 preached, there were not less than  
 fifteen hundred hearers; and out of  
 them

them God gave me two seals to my ministry, who are ornaments to the religion of our dear Lord and Savior.

What remains for me now to observe: but (may the Lord be graciously pleased to smile upon his inheritance, and refresh it with the genial showers of his grace!) though he has removed from the midst of us such a burning and shining light, may we bear upon our minds the promise of the great head of his church: "Lo! I am with you always." To him with the Father, and Holy Spirit, be ascribed dominion and power for ever and ever Amen.

THE END.





